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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 000830

SIPDIS

STATE FOR IO/UNP, PM, AF, EUR/PRM, EUR/ERA AND EUR/AGS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/17/2016

TAGS: [KPKO](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [SU](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: SUDAN: UNSC ACTION ON RE-HATting - EU PRESIDENCY
RESPONSE

REF: STATE 43008

Classified By: ACTING DCM GREGORY E. PHILLIPS

REASONS: 1.4 (B) AND (D)

1. (C) Pol Unit Chief delivered reftel points to MFA A/S-equivalent for International Organizations Helmut Boeck and his deputy Peter Huber on March 17. Boeck pointed out that Austria is not currently a UNSC member. However, as EU Council President Austria chairs discussions of UN issues in various EU fora, such as the Council working groups COAFR and CONUN, as well as the EU Political and Security Committee (PSC), which had recently discussed Darfur.

2. (C) Boeck and Huber agreed that parallel processes were appropriate in this situation, especially for the negotiations, but the question of the mandate was crucial. Boeck noted that UN Secretary General Annan had raised questions about the value of re-hatting per se. Boeck asked whether simply putting blue helmets on the current African Union (AU) force would accomplish much toward improving protection of the civilian population of Darfur. In his view, Boeck said, there was a question of revising the mandate for the mission. He asked pointedly whether the U.S. was considering a more robust mandate.

3. (C) Huber said it was not clear that the AU was willing or able to carry out such a mandate. There were dozens of small villages to protect in a vast area. It was not easy to locate and engage roving bands of armed militants. A force of a few thousand AU troops could not accomplish this, he thought. Even EU special forces had run into difficulties in their previous Congo mission, Artemis, he said. The armed bands were now pushing refugees into Chad to foment instability there. The conflict was increasingly a cross-border one.

4. (C) Further, Huber noted that force generation had been a problem for the UN mission in southern Sudan, and the force was still not at the required effective level. The EU, for its part, was preoccupied at the moment with a probable mission to Congo. There were significant logistical issues for supporting such a mission in a country as large as Sudan. The UN would need to formulate clear requirements and try to match the forces to the mandate. It was important that the UNSC not issue a mandate that would overwhelm the forces in the field, he added.

McCaw